

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Yosemite National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Centennial Implementation Strategy – Yosemite National Park

July 2007

Vision Statement

Yosemite National Park will help shape the future of parks and protected areas worldwide. Uniquely positioned by both geography and renown, Yosemite will play a leadership role in reconnecting the changing face of America and the broader global community with the meaning and value of our shared heritage. Yosemite will participate in reclaiming the role of America's national park system as a worldwide leader in conservation, exchanging best practices with protected areas throughout the world, using multiple international sister park relationships to foster an international dialogue in conservation and heritage preservation.

Situated in the nation's most populous and diverse state, Yosemite is within a day's drive of every major urban area in California and is experienced by more than 3.5 million visitors annually. In programs and facilities, the park will be accessible to visitors from every background, and will model principles of sustainability. Just as Yosemite's grand landscapes inspired citizen-leaders to create the national park system, the park will participate in forging a 21st century constituency passionately engaged in the future of national parks.

Together with our partners, Yosemite will be integral to the region's educational system. We will employ new media to capture the imagination of a new generation of learners, applying modern technologies in communicating traditional values, and reversing the trend of an increasing divide between the young and the natural world. We will provide quality educational experiences to people of all ages, fostering lifelong learning.

As a partner in stewardship responsibility over one of the largest contiguous designated Wilderness in the lower 48 states, Yosemite will engage in habitat restoration at the landscape level. We will work in concert with other Sierra land managers to foster a healthy Sierra Nevada ecosystem and ensure an enduring wilderness legacy. Remembering that living cultures are a critical part of the region's legacy, we will strengthen connections with tribal people affiliated with Yosemite.

Our vision for 2016 can be realized with our strongest assets: the men and women of Yosemite, and the partners who work side by side with us. National parks benefit from a passionate workforce, and the success of our Centennial vision hinges on a commitment to keeping our workforce vital. Yosemite will recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the face of America, drawn from the best and brightest. We will ensure our employees operate in a strong safety culture. We will provide employees with the tools and training to advance professionally and accomplish the mission. Similarly, Yosemite will nurture existing partners and seek to continuously broaden our partner base to effectively meet the needs of a growing nation in our most important arenas: stewardship, education, environmental leadership, and recreational experience.

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Yosemite's dramatic landscapes and spectacular resources draw more than 3.5 million visitors annually from around world, yet a typical visit is to destinations and facilities constructed 60 to 80 years ago. It is time to ensure that the quality of our facilities is equal to the unparalleled resource we are charged with protecting. Through the Centennial, Yosemite proposes a wide range of projects and programs designed to meet the needs of today's diverse visitors and set the standard for safe, accessible, sustainable facilities compatible with the landscape. One such project is the rehabilitation of the Tunnel View scenic overlook (PMIS 136555). Constructed in 1932, this site is the picture postcard view of Yosemite Valley, and is visited by as many as 7,000 people a day. Its age is evident, however. The overlook falls far below today's accessibility standards; the traffic and circulation patterns, designed for the 1930s, pose a significant safety hazard to single family vehicles, large tour buses, and pedestrians; sanitation facilities are inadequate, and; the historic view is compromised by encroaching vegetation. With the Yosemite Fund, the park will restore this iconic overlook.

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Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

- **Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.**

National parks today serve as powerful reminders of our nation's origins and the truly American idea of setting aside land for protection. Yosemite holds a prominent place in this story as, among other things, the birthplace of park rustic historic architecture. The park is home to five National Historic Landmarks that are elegant and irreplaceable icons of a bygone era, and more than 500 structures on the List of Classified Structures. Maintaining and rehabilitating these facilities is essential to their preservation for the next century of Americans to appreciate. For the Centennial, the park proposes a comprehensive rehabilitation and upgrade to five major historic destinations at the park, including the magnificent Ahwahnee Hotel, built in the early 20th century, and the Victorian Wawona Complex, one of the oldest developments in the park. These projects will authentically rehabilitate historic exteriors and grounds, and replace or upgrade systems and structural components to ensure the structures can withstand the tests of time and natural events. In this way Yosemite can conserve what is timeless while keeping pace with the needs of modern society.

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- **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

Central to preserving park resources “unimpaired” is the notion that parks must preserve the dynamic assemblies of interacting organisms and natural processes within their boundaries. Because surrounding urbanization is resulting in Yosemite becoming more and more of a biological island over time, the park has a critical role to play in providing habitat for a diversity of Sierra Nevada plants and wildlife.

In keeping with the Centennial vision, Yosemite will undertake a holistic effort to restore ecological integrity and scenic vistas by preventing the establishment and spread of invasive plants and removing the invasive populations that pose the greatest threat to park resources (PMIS 109635). The park will also launch an Aquatic Resources Management Plan that will plot a long-term course to restore aquatic habitats, including removal of non-native fish from targeted waters, allowing the return of native species through reintroduction and natural re-colonization. Concurrent with these efforts, we will work with adjacent protected areas to ensure a landscape level approach to sustaining a healthy Sierra Nevada ecosystem.

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- **Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

Yosemite’s infrastructure includes more than 1200 buildings, 500 miles of roads, and 14 campgrounds. Though over time the condition of these assets had been in decline, Yosemite has made significant gains in recent years in implementing robust asset management principles and practices. Yosemite is one of a few parks that have a Park Asset Management Plan (PAMP); therefore Yosemite will take the opportunity to be a leader in the National Park Service in utilizing best management practices by piloting implementation of the PAMP. The resulting improvements will be directly reflected in lowering the Facility Condition Index (FCI) numbers of high priority assets. By 2016, Yosemite will have targeted continued Centennial investment to its most important assets through combined use of the FCI and the Asset Priority Index.

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- **Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.**

Fundamental to interpreting and managing Yosemite is understanding how 9,000 years of human presence has shaped the park’s landscape, yet only 10% of park lands have been surveyed for cultural resources. With continued Centennial investment, the park can make significant strides in our understanding of the sweep of human history in Yosemite: 50% of park lands will be inventoried for archeological resources by 2016, and all

resources will be documented in ASMIS with a current condition assessment. All parkwide critical baseline ethnographic studies including oral histories, and cultural affiliation and traditional use studies will be completed. Key to completing this work will be close collaboration with the seven tribes affiliated with the park.

Moreover, by 2016, all collected archeological museum objects and archival documentation will be cataloged and accessioned into park museum collections, and accessible to the public. The park will collaborate with The Yosemite Fund to complete a Museum Master Plan, culminating in the design and construction of a sustainable facility to house these collections and interpret the significance of Yosemite' human past for all park visitors.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The vistas for which Yosemite is most famous are part of a larger, gradually evolving landscape of physical resources including rocks, water, and air. Understanding how the park's physical resources are changing will provide us with an early indication of how other processes, natural systems, cultural resources, species, and the visitor experience may be affected in the future. Yosemite recognizes that continuing to monitor the hydrology, geology, air and water quality, fires, night sky, and sounds within Yosemite is an essential task to understand how climate change, natural geologic processes, air and water pollution, fire, and human encroachment will continue to impact the park. Towards this goal, the park proposes to upgrade the Happy Isles Gauging station, which was established in 1915 and has remained in operation ever since (PMIS 94297). The upgrade will improve accuracy and provide realtime connectivity to other applications and databases. This is one of only 49 "benchmark" gauges located throughout the US and its long data record is a valuable resource in measuring ongoing changes in the environment.

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Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Yosemite National Park's history is a rich tapestry of interweaving stories from many diverse cultures including American Indians, Latino peoples, African-Americans and Chinese-Americans. The rapidly changing demographics in the local area, California and the United States as a whole are reflected in Yosemite's visitors. The park will serve as an outstanding example in the National Park Service of connecting diverse visitors with these compelling chapters in the nation's history, and fostering inclusive exploration and discussion of the American experience.

The park proposes to collaborate with its partner, the Yosemite Association, to increase Yosemite's relevancy to a diversity of Americans by creating a series of new interpretive programs highlighting the contributions of American Indian, Chinese, African-American, and Latino cultures to the park (PMIS 137608).

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Serve as the preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

In the face of global climate change and diminishing biodiversity throughout the world, national parks can be models of healthy, natural, sustainable ecosystems. Yosemite is well-positioned to play a leadership role in this endeavor. As host to one of the largest research programs in National Park Service, Yosemite issues hundreds of research permits each year which are tied directly to park research priorities, and enable park managers to make science-based decisions. As we approach 2016, the park will continue to build a comprehensive, collaborative, and transparent research program with the world's best universities. Together with the research community and adjacent land managers, we will address the Sierra Nevada region's most serious gaps in knowledge and most critical resource issues, and will make the research results fully accessible to the public. The park will be a living laboratory for piloting resource management strategies based on science-based decisionmaking.

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Together with the Yosemite Institute (YI), our primary education partner, Yosemite National Park's potential to inspire children to develop a conservation ethic is exceptional. The Institute has demonstrated success over the past 30 years in engaging youth at a personal and lasting level; some 13,000 youth pass through the program annually. Both the park and YI, however, recognize that we must find a way to reach underserved communities more effectively. With the promise of Centennial investment, a scholarship program designed to reach underserved youth will be launched, and will include a rigorous evaluation component to measure success, consistent with the NPS Interpretation & Education Renaissance. The evaluation tool will assess the effectiveness of the curriculum on students, teacher's instructional methods, curriculum development, student learning environment, and stewardship projects within the community. The evaluation will enable the development of an increasingly effective, measurable program.

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ENVIRONMENT

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Yosemite is one of the largest and most complex operations in the National Park Service. In FY06, more than 2600 FTE were required to accomplish the entirety of operations of the park, but only 22% were NPS employees. Therefore it is incumbent on the park to collaborate with its concessioner, Delaware North Company (DNC), to reduce the environmental impacts of the full suite of park operations. DNC is one of the environmental leaders in park concessions, achieving ISO 14001 certification in 2003. The park will encourage full implementation of DNC's Greenpath program, a comprehensive environmental management system covering all DNC operations. Yosemite will also continue to be a leader in reducing environmental impacts of operations. Yosemite became one of the first Climate Friendly Parks in the NPS in 2006, committing the park to reducing non-fire-related greenhouse gas and criteria pollutant emissions to ten percent below 2005 levels by 2010. Further, Yosemite will implement the comprehensive strategies outlined by the park's Environmental Management System to prevent pollution, reduce waste, incorporate sustainable planning, and implement environmentally preferable purchasing.

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

- **Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.**

Yosemite draws more than 3.5 million visitors annually, providing an opportunity to inspire an environmental conscience in millions of Americans. The park is committed to reaching all park visitors with environmental messaging to encourage changes in visitors' daily lives that will better protect the environment. Up to 10,000 visitors come into contact with concessions facilities, programs or services daily. Yosemite will continue to work with Delaware North to expand public awareness of its Greenpath program, a comprehensive environmental management system reducing environmental impacts, through increased messaging in all visitor points of contact with concessions operations.

Currently, each English-speaking visitor that sees a shuttle bus in the valley is made aware of its hybrid fuel technology through messaging on the bus itself. Yosemite will expand upon such efforts to improve the visibility of its own achievements in environmental practices. Finally, the park will also encourage direct involvement in preserving the park for future generations through volunteerism, such as the Habitat Protectors of Yosemite volunteer drop-in program.

- **Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.**

Yosemite will continue to be a leader in demonstrating how responsible energy use is fundamental to a sustainable future for the National Park Service. Yosemite commits to considering projected energy usage and costs, both short-term and long-term, during the planning stages for all new facilities or services. The park will also work with partners to promote energy savings through retrofitting existing facilities.

We will continue to utilize emerging technologies to reduce emissions and fuel consumption. For example, Yosemite recently replaced its fleet of polluting diesel buses with low-emissions, low-noise, fuel-efficient hybrid shuttle buses powered by both electricity and diesel fuel. If new facilities are constructed in the future, the design will incorporate innovative heating and cooling system such as the ground source heat pump technology recently utilized in the new Curry Village employee housing. By continually evaluating energy usage and opportunities for increased utilization of alternative fuels, Yosemite's operations will become more compatible with natural processes.

- **Serve as a model for energy efficiency, under Executive Order 13423, by ensuring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.**

Yosemite will continue to be a firm practitioner in analyzing new facilities through LEED standards developed by the US Green Building Council, and will model environmental leadership in facility design and construction. Through the Centennial Challenge program, Yosemite and its primary education partner, the Yosemite Institute, will collaborate in design and construction of an environmental education campus that will be a model of environmental stewardship and sustainability. The design will meet the nationally recognized LEED standards and the facility itself will be a powerful teaching tool to demonstrate thoughtful and responsible environmental design that sits lightly on the land. More than 13,000 students will pass through the facility each year. (PMIS 76026)

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Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The key to preserving Yosemite into the next century is a broad, diverse, engaged constituency. The park invests considerable time and resources into building on existing relationships with tribes, neighbors, partners, and adjacent communities, and is dedicated to reaching new constituents. Our partnership with U of California will engage students, their families, and their communities through a leadership institute and internship programs. We will work with gateway communities and grassroots organizations to

address trans-boundary environmental issues and expand outreach programs with emerging communities in California's Central Valley to find common ground in our shared values: clean water, clean air, and natural spaces for family enjoyment and spiritual renewal. Through our volunteer programs, 1000s of visitors will engage in hands-on activities such as water quality assessment, invasive species eradication, and visitor use monitoring. Finally, with innovative internet-based programs, we will connect people and the environment with a level of interactivity that will ignite and engage the young as well as facilitate nationwide participation in resource management issues.

RECREATION

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

- **Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.**

Yosemite's network of more than 800 miles of trail is fundamental to the visitor experience in Yosemite. It enables public access throughout the park, from short paths leading to popular Yosemite Valley destinations to multi-day wilderness treks on nationally significant trails such as the John Muir and Pacific Crest Trails. The trail system has endured decades of extremely heavy use, and is now in a deteriorated state. Yosemite's trail system requires substantial reconstruction to restore it to a safe and sustainable condition. By leveraging existing, long standing partnerships with The Yosemite Fund; The California Conservation Corps; The Youth Conservation Corps; The City of San Francisco; and The Student Conservation Association, Yosemite proposes to undertake a ten year program to rehabilitate this world-renowned and historic trail system (PMIS 137690). These repairs will restore a world class trails system in one of the nation's premiere hiking destinations. The trails will be designed to protect park resources and offer a range of experiences accommodating visitors of all abilities, including youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

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Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

- **Increase annual volunteer hours by 100 percent, from 5.2 million hours to 10.4 million hours.**

Yosemite is a favorite destination for "volunteer vacationers", evidenced by the fact that this remote national park has the 2nd largest volunteer program in the National Park Service. By 2016, Yosemite will strive to double the current volunteer program, accommodating at least 6,500 volunteers to perform 232,000 hours of service annually.

Volunteers will improve the natural and cultural conditions in the park through wilderness and front-country restoration activities such as exotic vegetation eradication, trail rehabilitation, wildlife management, and trash removal. A rigorous volunteer program will recruit from all facets of society and all age ranges, and will build a new constituency directly engaged in preserving park resources and furthering the mission of the National Park Service.

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The last vestige of the frontier lies preserved in the wilderness of our national parks. Yosemite is 94% Wilderness and we have an outstanding opportunity to provide a superlative national park experience to children. By 2016 more than 1/3 of America's population will be of Hispanic, African- American, and Asian descent, and this changing population is largely unexposed to wilderness values. Yosemite proposes to address this growing disconnect by expanding its Wildlink volunteer program, which brings culturally diverse low income students from across California into Yosemite on wilderness expeditions. The students collect resource monitoring data and take digital photos; the information collected is then loaded onto a website for future use in the classroom. Students return to their communities as ambassadors for wilderness, helping ensure the diverse California citizenry of tomorrow is informed and committed to enduring resources of Wilderness.

Yosemite further plans to foster schoolchildren engagement in park science programs by working with corporate donors to fund outreach programs conducted by park educators to involve schools in data collection supporting park research goals.

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

- **Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.**

Yosemite maintains a broad array of ranger and partner facilitated educational programs, but our capacity is stretched thin. A new infusion of seasonal rangers, coupled with a continued emphasis on leveraging our partners to participate directly in visitor programs, will enable the park to reach more visitors directly. The variety, location, and frequency of ranger-facilitated programs will be focused on reaching traditionally underserved populations, including those with disabilities and non-English speaking visitors. (PMIS 137608) Working with partners, the park proposes to increase Yosemite's relevancy to a diversity of Americans by creating a series of new interpretive programs highlighting Yosemite's untold stories. A series of partner led seminars will speak to the contributions

of American Indian, Chinese, African-American, and Latino cultures to the park. Concurrently, we will work to ensure our marketing and messaging campaigns effectively reach diverse audiences through existing connections with ethnic recreation groups such as the Central California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

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- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

At Yosemite we are striving to ensure that every audience is exposed to the idea of national parks, which we believe is a prerequisite to full access and enjoyment. In the coming years we will collect extensive data to help us better understand economic and cultural barriers to the park and will use that information to focus our outreach efforts and enhance accessibility. We will expand our community liaison program, sending a cadre of rangers outside park boundaries equipped with innovative multimedia outreach materials to increase awareness and build relationships with the park. We will reach out through the communities' own modes of communication: local and ethnic newspapers, radio and television, community events, and grassroots organizations. We will partner with gateway communities to create seamless visitor services and communication throughout the region, tailoring aspects to serve emerging markets—including the new diverse face of California. By 2016, Yosemite will be a more comfortable, familiar place for a wide spectrum of visitors, and we will have deepened our own institutional capacity to understand and provide for the different needs of different groups.

EDUCATION

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

- **Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.**

New technologies are creating different and exciting ways of exploring in and learning about national parks that resonate with contemporary youth. Yosemite National Park will continue to be one of the leaders in technology-based programming in the National Park Service. We will begin a program of enhanced downloadable web content that will include changing pod casts in both audio and streaming video on topics that will tell the diversity of Yosemite's stories. With the help of technology partners, Yosemite will also be exploring options like cell-phone tours of popular trails and other emerging media opportunities. We will continue to link archival and historic photographic images to the internet, and create virtual tours of changing art exhibits, the museum, and the visitor center, which will allow the public a whole new level of access to Yosemite's world class collections. A revamped and interactive website will provide instant access to real-time information about popular trails, vistas, safety considerations, and ecological and other interpretive content.

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

- **Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.**

Yosemite's potential to enroll a new cadre of Junior Rangers is enormous: some 800,000 of Yosemite's 3.5 million annual visitors are children, many of whom are coming from diverse communities. Hispanic children (aged 0-19) in California will increase from 50% of the children's population in 2010 to 65% by 2050. Imagine if every one of those kids had the opportunity to become a Junior Ranger at Yosemite. The park proposes to address untapped potential in the Junior Ranger program in two ways. A dedicated Junior Ranger Center, staffed by a cadre of interpretive rangers made possible with Centennial funding, will meet demand for hands-on learning and will provide Junior Ranger programs that encourage children to practice stewardship in the park and back at home. Further, Yosemite will develop a series of Junior Ranger books in English and Spanish, with translation sheets in French, German, Mandarin and Japanese. These books will be free of charge and will lead children on paths of discovery throughout the park. The ability to reach children from a wide array of cultural backgrounds will be a powerful tool in communicating the national park mission into the next century.

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Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

- **Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.**

Protecting Yosemite into the next century not only requires investment in understanding our complex natural systems and critical cultural resources; it also requires that we understand who our visitors are, how they learn, and what they need. In order to achieve Yosemite's goal of developing a sense of connection and ownership in the park in every visitor, it is critical that management include the human dimension in assessing cultural and natural resources. Yosemite has initiated an aggressive social science program that works with planning, concession management, safety, visitor protection, and interpretation issues to better understand park visitation patterns. By 2016, the park will have developed a comprehensive program in recreation ecology; a track record of at least ten years of Visitor Experience and Resource Protection reports, regularly published comprehensive visitor use surveys, and pedestrian/transportation needs assessment models.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The opportunity to have a hand in guiding the future of a national park not only instills a sense of ownership but confirms a citizen's role in their government. At Yosemite we recognize that park plans and decisions are richer and more comprehensive with a wider

breadth of involvement and input. In the coming years the park will continue to develop new and innovative opportunities for the public to play a part in the decision-making process. We will create virtual meetings, open houses and workshops on the internet; develop materials and messages to engage people from different cultural backgrounds; work with universities to build course content around park management issues; and develop interactive multimedia programs that help make such management issues interesting and relevant to a variety of audiences. Lastly, with an emphasis on citizen empowerment, we will track and communicate how individual participation helped shape decisions and plans in the park, so that people do feel that sense of ownership in what they helped create and protect.

PROFESSIONALISM

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

- **Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.**

Yosemite is located near California's Central valley, one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the state. In counties adjacent to the park, Hispanics constitute around 45% of the population. Yosemite will continue to focus outreach efforts in local communities to increase familiarity with Yosemite. We will also partner with the Yosemite Fund and the University of California at Merced, which has the most diverse student body of the ten UC campuses, to recruit multilingual interns who speak Spanish, French, Mandarin, German, Arabic, Hmong, Portuguese, Italian, and other languages (PMIS 137609).

The park's Human Relations staff and Equal Opportunity Committee commit to work with the park's supervisors in all divisions to recruit the best and the brightest. Park and concession staff will ramp up efforts to actively participate in job fairs, resume training, and other opportunities for employee recruitment. Yosemite recognizes that making sure that there are no barriers due to ethnicity, physical impairment, sexual orientation, or religion will result in a diverse workforce that is passionate about the park's mission and able to communicate the NPS mission to all park visitors.

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- **Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.**

With one of the largest workforces in the NPS, Yosemite has an opportunity to take a leadership role in demonstrating that our employees are among our most valued resources. Yosemite will evaluate recruitment, development and retention strategies to prepare its workforce to meet the complex demands of the next century of managing the park.

Yosemite will increase its efforts to provide a quality work environment by rounding out the suite of services available to employees. Operation of the daycare center in Yosemite Valley will continue, and a wellness center will be added to the El Portal Administrative Site in addition to the wellness center serving employees in the Valley. Park management commits to providing increased opportunities for professional growth by offering training and developmental opportunities at the park. Finally, park management will create a safe avenue for employee feedback by encouraging use of suggestion boxes installed in employee break rooms throughout the park. By allowing suggestions to be made anonymously and responding to every submission, management hopes to remove any final barrier to improved employee satisfaction.

Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

- **Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.**

The NPS needs to ensure development of leaders who are equipped to meet the ever changing demands of increasingly complex park management challenges. Yosemite is uniquely positioned to develop a long-term partnership with the University of California Merced (UCM) School of Management. The University of California is one of the most highly recognized and advanced university systems in the world. The park proposes to collaborate with UCM to establish a National Parks Institute (PMIS 137696) that will focus on the development of the highest levels of managerial excellence and advanced research, undertaken in a global context, designed to anticipate resource issues before they become impacts or impairments. The institute will integrate NPS professionals with some of the finest faculty in the world to offer four year, masters and doctoral degrees, along with executive certificate seminars similar to Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. The NPI will build a networked alumni available to serve each other in a continuous capacity with communication, research and shared best practices.

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Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

- **Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.**

Yosemite benefits from a workforce that is passionate about the mission of the National Park Service. This is a tremendous asset, and this commitment to mission ensures that Yosemite is extraordinarily well protected and enjoys an extremely high visitor satisfaction rating. It can also be a weakness, as park employees are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. We have paid the price in an unacceptably high injury and accident rate. Learning from organizations that have transformed their safety

performance, we will engage all levels of the organization in implementing strategies that create and sustain a culture of safety. Among these strategies is developing tools aimed at educating employees and visitors alike about the risks associated with working and recreating in a complex wilderness environment. The park will produce a series of creative and provocative digital instructional media focused on these goals, which will be blended into employee training and interpretive presentations. Preventative information will be displayed in websites, hotels, visitor centers, shuttle buses and at places where people gather.

Model what it means to work in partnership.

- **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Yosemite is fortunate to have active park partners, both not-for-profit and for-profit, who enhance visitor experiences and protect resources immeasurably beyond what we could accomplish alone. Yosemite will continue to serve as a model of best practices in partnerships for the NPS. Yosemite and its partners will demonstrate a culture of collaboration and strategic focus through quarterly Primary Park Partners meetings, where the five major partners and park management gather to share resources and avoid conflicting objectives and activities.

For the Centennial Challenge, Yosemite has proposed a number of visionary projects which, with the collaboration of our partners, will: address the needs of the changing face of America (PMIS 137608, 137607); prepare its workforce to meet the demands of managing national parks in the next century (PMIS 137609, 137636); engender a new generation of stewards (PMIS 137605, 137687); exemplify environmental leadership (PMIS 76026); and reach a new standard of excellence in the stewardship of park resources and assets (PMIS 94297, 136555, 109635, 137690). Yosemite will embody the enduring legacy of partnerships in protecting our nation's treasures.

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